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Not Your Ordinary Business Model

A cutting edge, next-generation online venture may sound like a random collection of tired business clichés, but it's an accurate representation of Abbyshot Custom Clothiers and its owners, Adam Bragg and Bonnie Cook.

Based in Mount Pearl, Bragg and Cook have developed a business based on their common interests in movies, his work on the internet and her talents in fashion design. And for those who just have to have that cool outfit the good guys were wearing when they kick-boxed a hundred bad guys into oblivion, there's the on-line incarnation of the company, abbyshot.com

The inspiration for their company was the 1999 film The Matrix. And while the film made computer geeks look cool again, made 'Trinity' a popular girls name, and became a multi-billion dollar franchise, it also inspired Bragg and Cook to start making the clothing from the movies and selling those creations on the Internet. Morpheus, Neo and Trinity wannabes now have their own on-line clothier.

The Mount Pearl duo has been quietly but skillfully setting the internet abuzz with their take on small business success. For Abbyshot Clothiers it's all about giving the customer what they want - quality, attention to detail and a place to indulge in a little fantasy - while building a company around what they love to do. Bragg handles the internet side of the business, while Cook designs and supervises the production of the coats. "Everyone who works here is a part of a close-knit team, each person brings something valuable and unique to the company, we're quite fortunate in that," Bragg says.

These are not off-the-rack Halloween costumes. Abbyshot coats are custom made original garments that are form-fitted to the individual, and retail in the $400-500 US-dollar range. They're becoming popular all over the world with sales throughout the United States and Europe, and even as far as Australia and Japan. "We get e-mails and phone calls from all over the world. A couple of times we've even had to check our world map just to know where they were from. It's an amazing opportunity to be able to connect with people from so many different countries," Cook said.

On-line, Bragg maintains a busy website that facilitates thousands - fans of the clothing, fans of the movies, and fans of other genres like Japanese anime and computer games. The company presently has products that were inspired by such movies as The Matrix, Blade, Trigun, Tomb Raider, and Dogma, with many more on the horizon based on suggestions that their customers hope will inspire Abbyshot to develop new clothing lines. It's a full-time job that allows personal interaction between company and customer through discussion groups, e-mail and of course, on-line shopping.

Their successful marriage of apparel manufacturing and on-line marketing garnered Abbyshot a nomination in the 2003 Newfoundland and Labrador Export Awards. Another fitting tribute - one of their coats was recently sold to a U.S. wax museum, to be displayed on a life-sized wax statue of Matrix star Keanu Reeves.

www.abbyshot.com

Exports Highlight a Growing and Diverse Economy

Forty-three nominations, three finalists, and one 2003 Exporter of the Year Award presented in May highlights the strength of the Newfoundland and Labrador manufacturing sector. The nominated companies are a who's who of the province's business community, and point to diversity in a robust economy.

Rutter Technologies Inc. was named the 2003 Newfoundland and Labrador Exporter of the Year at a ceremony at the Fairmont Hotel in St. John's. North Atlantic Refining Limited and Genoa Design International Ltd. were recognized as finalists for the award.

"These companies are a testament to the outstanding products and services Newfoundland and Labrador companies are exporting around the world. In doing so, they not only help grow their own businesses, they also help bring new wealth and create new jobs in our province," said Industry, Trade and Rural Development Minister Judy Foote.

Rutter Technologies Inc., of St. John's (featured in the Spring 2003 edition of The Ambassador), develops and manufactures marine Voyage Data Recorders, or VDR systems, which are similar to the well-known "black boxes" found in aircraft. Company sales grew over 200 per cent between 2001 and 2002.

North Atlantic Refining Limited of Come By Chance (featured in The Ambassador Vol 9 No 3), is one of Newfoundland and Labrador's largest employers, with over 600 employees at the refinery and 100 others selling North Atlantic's products in domestic and international markets. North Atlantic's top quality products are sold in 25 countries around the world and the company exports over a billion dollars in petroleum products each year.

Genoa Design International Ltd. of Manuels has provided naval architecture technology services to the marine industry since 1995, and hires top graduates of the Marine Institute's naval architecture and marine technology programs. Genoa is an industry leader in the use of the Internet as a delivery system – positioning itself as a serious contender for production and design contracts in shipyards across North America (see company profile on page 3).

"Rutter Technologies, North Atlantic Petroleum and Genoa Design are excellent examples of the many world class operations in this province that compete internationally. These companies deserve to be acknowledged," said John Patten, chair of Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters - Newfoundland and Labrador Division.

The 2003 Newfoundland and Labrador Export Awards are designed to celebrate success and encourage new exporters to enter the global marketplace. The Export Awards event is a joint initiative of the Department of Industry, Trade and Rural Development and the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters - Newfoundland and Labrador Division.

www.gov.nf.ca/itrd/ExportAwards2003.htm

Com-Pac Camping: Easier, Lighter, Faster

'Up in the woods' may get crowded as Newfoundland and Labrador's Com-Pac Camp Ltd., a new Gander-based manufacturer of compact campers begins rolling out products designed to be towed by smaller, lighter vehicles like ATVs motorcycles and compact cars. Com-Pac's owner, 34 year-old Gander native Darren Kieley, started the company on a part-time basis a year ago when he discovered a niche in the marketplace for the product. He identified the market potential for compact campers through his interest in camping and traveling by motorcycle. "When I investigated the compact camper market, I found there was very little out there and virtually nothing in Atlantic Canada," said Kieley. "I began to explore the idea of making a compact camper for myself and before long I came up with a concept and a design." "Com-Pac Camp Ltd. offers a unique product in the marketplace. The potential for company growth and export expansion is significant, which is why government is pleased to support Com-Pac," said Industry Trade and Rural Development Minister Judy Foote, during a tour of the company's manufacturing facility in May.

Mr. Kieley developed a base model and has since developed new compact campers with options like coolers, stoves and furnaces.

The camper measures 79 inches long and 39 inches wide folded down, and opens into a full camper with two beds that can sleep four.

www.com-pac-camp.com

Genoa Design: Marine Expertise on the Net

As more business moves to the Internet to reach global markets, it's no surprise that more Newfoundland and Labrador companies are finding their products, services and expertise gaining a worldwide reputation. Genoa Design International Limited is one local company that has been designed to thrive in the digital realm.

Company president Len Pecore started Genoa Design in 2000 by offering naval design and drafting services over the internet. The naval architect and former Canadian Navy officer has 12 employees who provide all the traditional services of a naval architecture firm, using computer-assisted design and development (CADD) technology to design ships, produce blueprints and three-dimensional drawings, and modeling services.

But Genoa delivers these services via the Internet, where drawings, specifications and documentation can be viewed and downloaded by clients from the company's website. Blueprints traditionally delivered in drawing tubes on reams of paper now can be viewed on-line. Where customers typically received updates on a long-term project, clients of Genoa Design can simply log on at the Genoa website to check progress daily.

Since its inception three years ago, Genoa Design has contributed to several local and international projects including designs and drawings for the Matthew, a replica 15th century Caravel, and more recently, the construction of three new Kennedy-class ferry boats for the Staten Island run in New York.

The company was recently chosen as a finalist for the 2003 Export Awards given by the Department of Industry, Trade and Rural Development and the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters Newfoundland and Labrador Division to celebrate success and encourage new exporters to enter the global marketplace.

www.genoadesign.com

Did You Know?

- 1. The RBC Financial Group's Provincial Outlook (Spring 2003) says Newfoundland and Labrador's "energy and mining megaprojects will help it rival Alberta as the nation's growth leader during 2003-04." The influential investment newsletter also stated that this province is expected to have "another two years of five percent growth, thus stretching the record to six of the past seven years," and we'll "lead the country in non-residential investment," in 2003.
- 2. The Royal Commission on Renewing and Strengthening Our Place in Canada has released its final report. It is available online at www.gov.nf.ca/royalcomm/
- 3. Tom Hanks' company Playtone *(My Big Fat Greek Wedding)* has signed up Brad Peyton of Gander to write and direct an animated version of *The Spider and The Fly*, based on Mary Howitts's 1829 poem. Universal Studios was so impressed by his presentation and script pitch for The Spider and the Fly that it signed him for a three-picture deal.
- 4. Labrador may no longer be our best-kept eco-adventure secret. Explore magazine has identified two destinations, Cooper's Minipi Camps near Happy Valley-Goose Bay and Experience Labrador of Cartwright, as being among the top 50 adventure trips in the world!

Bell Island Company Building for Construction

A new Bell Island company is betting that the Newfoundland construction industry will build a path to its door - they'll even provide the scaffolding. Small scale manufacturing is a strategic growth industry for Newfoundland and Labrador. In 2002, the value of manufacturing shipments grew by 1.7 per cent to $2.24 billion. Island Manufacturing and Galvanizing Inc. is a prime example of an innovative new company in this sector. The company is expected to create approximately 15 full-time permanent and five seasonal jobs. Island Manufacturing will make hot dipped galvanized scaffolding components for modular system scaffolding. The majority of these products will be exported to its parent company, Don Fry Scaffolding Services Inc. in Ontario. The remaining product will be sold or rented across Newfoundland and Labrador.

Hot dipped galvanizing is a cost-effective corrosion process for most major industrial applications. Currently, there are no other manufacturers of these scaffolding systems in Atlantic Canada.

To assist with the company's anticipated growth, the company has received EDGE status from the provincial government. "In 2002, manufacturing shipments were worth $2.23 billion and employed over 17,000 people. "The sector is increasingly becoming a more important part of our economy, especially in rural Newfoundland and Labrador," said Industry Trade and Rural Development Minister Judy Foote. "With support from government through incentives like our EDGE program, small scale manufacturing enterprises such as Island Manufacturing and Galvanizing are creating new employment opportunities for our people throughout the province."

Minister's message

Hon. Judy M. Foote
Minister of Industry, Trade & Rural Development

Later this month, representatives from the Department of Industry, Trade and Rural Development will host RuralEXPO 2003 in Gander. This three-day event, taking place from September 25-27th, will bring together the best of Newfoundland and Labrador rural business, culture and community to highlight the importance of the rural economy in our province. The event will be an opportunity to promote and celebrate the many success stories of businesses that are doing it right here in rural Newfoundland and Labrador.

There is no doubt that we have a lot to celebrate. Over 26,000 jobs have been created in our province since 1996. Over 60 per cent of those jobs were created outside the Northeast Avalon. Government's Renewal Strategy for Jobs and Growth is working and creating real opportunities for people across our province. More people are working in the province than ever before and unemployment has decreased for every month so far this year.

These are exciting times in Newfoundland and Labrador. There is a renewed confidence in our people. RuralEXPO 2003 will build on that confidence as business, community economic development organizations, industry associations and youth join together to promote economic opportunity.

As Ambassadors, your role is to carry the theme of RuralEXPO 2003 throughout the year. By sharing key statistics and information contained in our success stories with you, we hope you will pass it along to others. You are our eyes and ears in markets where new opportunities exist for our businesses and we depend on you to share our good news. I encourage each of you to attend RuralEXPO 2003. For those of you who are unable to attend, please visit the RuralEXPO 2003 website at www.gov.nl.ca/ruralexpo. As Ambassadors, your feedback is appreciated, both on RuralEXPO 2003 and on new and innovative ideas you have to assist with promoting business and economic opportunity.

HELP spread the message!

Thank you for reading this edition of The Ambassador newsletter. We are always looking for ways to reach as many people as possible with the good news about business in Newfoundland and Labrador. If this copy of The Ambassador was mailed to you, pass it along, or request extra copies so you can **help spread the news**. If you're reading someone else's copy of the newsletter, contact us and we will put you on our mailing list. See our contact information at right.

Departmental Missions and Exhibitions

EVENT	LOCATION	DATE	CONTACT	PHONE
Pharmatech	Palm Springs, CA	Sept. 21-23	Maria Yablon	729-4936
IMBC (Biotechnology)	Chiba, Japan	Sept. 21-27	Brian Wade	729-2294
Rural Expo 2003	Gander, NL	Sept. 25-27	Larry Weatherbie	729-3760
New England Trade Mission	Boston, MA	Oct. 6-10	Barry Snow	729-3361
CoreNet	Atlanta, GA	Oct. 11-15	Maria Yablon	729-4936
Canadian Institute of Mining (NL Branch)	St. John's, NL	Oct. 31-Nov. 1	Dave Evans	292-4073
Team Canada Atlantic Trade Mission	Washington, DC	Nov. 2-6	Jonathan Brockway	729-3680

Newfoundland & Labrador Canada
Department of Industry, Trade and Rural Development

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